

Prazosin

Minipress® is another names for this medication.

How Is This Medication Useful?

- Prazosin is an alpha blocker used for relaxing the urethral sphincter to ease the urination process in animals with disorders of urination.
- Prazosin is also used to treat high blood pressure, pulmonary hypertension and aids in the treatment of some heart conditions. Prazosin is less well studied than a similar drug hydralazine and its capsule dosage form makes it less convenient for dosing than hydralazine. However, prazosin appears to cause less severe increase in heart rate when compared to hydralazine. Prazosin should be considered for aortic or mitral regurgitation, when hydralazine is not effective or not well tolerated.

Are There Conditions or Times When Its Use Might Cause More Harm Than Good?

- Prazosin should be used with caution in patients with chronic kidney disease or low blood pressure.
- There are some anecdotal reports that dogs with the ABCB1 or MDR1 genetic defect which often leads to sensitivity to multiple drugs, can also be overly sensitive to prazosin. Dose should be reduced or alternate drugs used in dogs with this genetic defect.
- If your animal has any of the above conditions, talk to your veterinarian about the potential risks of using the medication versus the benefits that it might have.

What Side Effects Can Be Seen With Its Use?

- Side effects of prazosin can include low blood pressure, weakness or dizziness, nausea, vomiting or diarrhea, rapid heart rate, hyperactivity or increased body temperature. Contact your veterinarian if any of these occur.
- Drug tolerance has been reported in humans, but dosage adjustment, temporarily withdrawing the drug, and/or adding an aldosterone antagonist such as spironolactone usually corrects this.
- Overdose could result in high heart rate, weakness, dizziness, low blood pressure, vomiting, lethargy or shock. In case of overdose, contact your emergency veterinarian immediately.

How Should It Be Given?

- Phenoxybenzamine is usually given by mouth twice to three times daily in dogs and once to twice daily in cats.
- Successful outcome of your animal's treatment with this medication depends upon your commitment and ability to administer it exactly as the veterinarian has prescribed. If you have difficulty giving doses consult your veterinarian or pharmacist who can offer administration techniques or change the dosage form to a type of medication that may be more acceptable to you and your animal.
- If you miss a dose of this medication you should give it as soon as you remember it, but if it is within a few hours of the regularly scheduled dose, wait and give it at the regular time. Do not double a dose as this can be toxic to your pet.
- Some other drugs can interact with this medication so tell your veterinarian about any drugs or foods that you currently give your animal. Do not give new foods or medications without first asking your veterinarian. The following drug interactions have either been reported or are theoretical in people or animals:
 - **Beta-blocking Agents** (e.g., propranolol): May enhance the hypotensive effects seen after the first dose of prazosin.
 - **Clonidine**: May decrease prazosin antihypertensive effects.
 - **Sildenafil** (and other PDE Inhibitors): May increase risk for hypotension.
 - **Verapamil or Nifedipine**: May cause synergistic hypotensive effects when used with prazosin.

What Other Information Is Important About This Medication?

- Phenoxybenzamine should be stored in a tight, light resistant, childproof container away from all children and other household pets.
- Phenoxybenzamine has been around for a long time, but in recent years, has become less available and is as a result sometimes very expensive. At times, only compounding pharmacists can get the bulk drug and trade name products are not available.
- Phenoxybenzamine should be given with food.

References:

Plumb Veterinary Drug Handbook
Wendy Blount, DVM – PracticalVetMed.com